

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /096 W
-----019656 221405Z /72

R 221206Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1772
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 2511

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT SCUL SHUM HU PL UR US
SUBJECT: BILLY GRAHAM VISITS TO POLAND AND SOVIET UNION

USUN FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

1. SUMMARY. DR. SANDOR HARASZTI DISCUSSED PLANS FOR BILLY GRAHAM TO VISIT POLAND AND EFFORTS TO ARRANGE VISIT TO SOVIET UNION WITH EMBASSY POLOFF. HE SAID HE AND DR. SMYTH, VICE PRESIDENT OF DR. BILLY GRAHAM FOR INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY, HAD BEEN PROMISED A VISA TO GO TO SOVIET UNION TO DISCUSS FEASIBILITY OF GRAHAM VISIT. END SUMMARY.

2. SANDOR HARASZTI, WHO IS GRAHAM'S OFFICIAL CONSULTANT FOR EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS, IS CURRENTLY IN HUNGARY ACCOMPANYING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, SR. HARASZTI SAID THAT BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR HUNGARY HE DISCUSSED PLANS FOR DR. GRAHAM'S VISIT TO SOVIET UNION WITH MAHLON HENDERSON OF SOVIET DESK BUT DID NOT HAVE TIME TO REPORT ON HIS SUBSEQUENT MEETING AT SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON.

3. HARASZTI SAID HE WAS RECEIVED AT SOVIET EMBASSY JUNE 9
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BY FIRST SECRETARY IKAR IVANOVICH ZAVRAZHNOV, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR U.S. CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS. HE TOLD ZAVRAZHNOV THAT HE AND DR. SMYTH WOULD LIKE TO VISIT SOVIET UNION JUL 27-AUG 7 TO CONTACT RUSSIAN CHURCH AND STATE OFFICIALS, INCLUDING DR. ZHITKOV, PASTOR OF MOSCOW'S LARGEST BAPTIST CHURCH, DR. BICHKOV, GENERAL SECRETARY OF ALL UNION COMMITTEE OF CHRISTIANS AND

BAPTISTS AND RANKING MEMBERS OF THE STATE COMMITTEE
FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, CONCERNING A POTENTIAL BILLY
GRAHAM VISIT.

4. HARASZTI SAID HE WAS CORDIALLY RECEIVED BY ZAVRAZHNOV WHO STATED HE HAD DISCUSSED HARASZTI'S VISIT BEFORE-HAND WITH AMBASSADOR DOBRY BIN AND WAS SPEAKING WITH LATTER'S AUTHORITY. ZAVRAZHNOV STATED PRESENT TIME WAS NOT MOST OPPORTUNE ONE FOR WORKING ON A VISIT BY DR. GRAHAM TO SOVIET UNION GIVEN PRESENT EBB IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, ZAVRAZHNOV SAID DR. GRAHAM'S INITIATIVE WAS WELCOME "SINCE HIS PERSON IS WELL-KNOWN AND HIS COMING MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES."

5. ZAVRAZHNOV RECOUNTED LONG STORY TO HARASZTI ABOUT HOW HE HAD BEEN MADE TO LOOK BAD WHEN HE HAD RECOMMENDED IN FAVOR OF A VISIT BY A U.S. SENATOR RECENTLY AND THAT SENATOR HAD SAID THINGS IN THE SOVIET UNION WHICH HAD NOT CONTRIBUTED TO STRENGTHENING U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. HARASZTI REPLIED THAT DR. GRAHAM WOULD NOT WISH TO EMBARRASS HIS HOSTS AND WAS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH PEACE, BRIDGE-BUILDING, AND PROMOTING RELIGIOUS BROTHERHOOD. ZAVRAZHNOV CONCLUDED MEETING BY EXPRESSING HIS PERSONAL UNOFFICIAL OPINION THAT A VISIT BY DR. GRAHAM WAS POSSIBLE AND ENCOURAGING DR. SMYTH AND DR. HARASZTI TO CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS. HE
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ASSURED HARASZTI THAT HE AND SMYTH WOULD BE GIVEN VISAS FOR THEIR PLANNED JULY TRIPS.

6. HARASZTI IS MEETING ZHITKOV AND BITCHKOV IN PRAGUE AFTER HE LEAVES BUDAPEST TOMORROW. HE SAID THAT THE RUSSIAN BAPTISTS INTEND TO MEET WITH DR. KING IN PRAGUE AS WELL AND TO EXTEND TO DR. KING AN INVITATION TO VISIT THE SOVIET UNION. BOTH HARASZTI AND KING WOULD VIEW SUCH A VISIT AS PAVING THE WAY FOR DR. GRAHAM. HARASZTI SAID HE WAS ALSO RELIABLY INFORMED THAT KING'S INVITATION TO PRAGUE WAS EXPRESSLY APPROVED IN MOSCOW.

7. KING'S VISIT TO HUNGARY HAS GONE WELL (SEE SEPTTEL) AND SHOULD HELP FACILITATE FURTHER EXCHANGES. SOVIET AMBASSADOR, CZECH CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, AND POLISH CHARGE ALL CAME TO RECEPTION FOR DR. KING GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR JUNE 21.

8. WITH REGARD TO DR. GRAHAM'S VISIT TO POLAND SCHEDULED FOR OCT 6-16, HARASZTI INDICATED THAT HE (HARASZTI) WILL BE VISITING CARDINAL KROL IN PHILADELPHIA TO GET LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION TO HIGH POLISH ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADERS. HARASZTI WISHES TO CONVEY MESSAGE FROM DR. GRAHAM TO THOSE

LEADERS THAT DR. GRAHAM IN NO WAY INTENDS TO USE HIS VISIT
TO UNDERMINE OR DETRACT FROM POSITION OF CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN POLAND. HE HOPES TO GAIN CATHOLIC SUPPORT FOR GRAHAM'S
VISIT TO POLAND.
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